

# Libyan rebels massacre black Africans

By Wolfgang Weber

The opposition forces in Libya attempting to march on Tripoli with the assistance of American, French and British bombs are far removed from the image of innocent civilians fighting for freedom and democracy promoted by the media and political circles.

This is made clear in a March 22 article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by Gunnar Heinsohn, the author of *Encyclopaedia of Genocide* (Rowohlt, 1998).

Heinsohn cites a report by the well-known Zimbabwean journalist and documentary filmmaker Farai Sezenzo dealing with barbaric, pogrom-like massacres perpetrated by the so-called "rebels" against black African workers in Libya. The article states:

"Because mercenaries from Chad and Mali are presumed to be fighting for him [Gaddafi], the lives of a million African refugees and thousands of African migrants are at risk. A Turkish construction worker told the British radio sta-



A cocked pistol points near the head of the black African teenager. A Libyan rebel barks questions in Arabic, waving an accusing finger as he suggests his captive is a paid pro-government mercenary. The youth's face freezes with muted terror.

tion BBC: "We had seventy to eighty people from Chad working for our company. They were massacred with pruning shears and axes, accused by the attackers of being Gaddafi's troops. The Sudanese people were massacred. We saw it for ourselves."

The genocide authority Heinsohn explains: "It is stan-

dard knowledge in genocide research that minorities come under attack in civil wars because at least one party to the conflict accuses them of collaborating with the enemy....

"Whoever wants to prevent crimes against humanity with the use of force...is always in danger of helping one side in the neutralisation or even extermina-

tion of the other side.... UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 17 against the Libyan government provides a perfect example.

"All the stops of international criminal law have been pulled against those prepared to bloodily defend their power. The material assets at risk are meticulously listed. But neither in the text of the

resolution nor in the speeches of US Secretary of State Clinton or French President Sarkozy is any mention made of warnings or legal threats directed to the insurgents.

The use of 'mercenaries' by the Libyan leadership is expressly condemned. But genocidal acts conducted under the same pretext—such as the mass killings of black African workers reported by Farai Sezenzo—go unmentioned.... A cloak of complete silence is being thrown up surrounding the deeds of his [Gaddafi's] opponents."

On February 28, the Arab TV station Al Jazeera reported the racist massacre of black African workers by so-called "freedom fighters" as follows: "Dozens of workers from sub-Saharan Africa, it is feared, have been killed and hundreds are hiding because angry opponents of the government are hunting down black African mercenaries, witnesses reported.... According to official reports, about 90 Kenyans and 64 people from southern Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Lesotho,

Zambia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Burundi landed in Nairobi today.

"One of them, Julius Kiluu, a 60-year-old construction manager, told Reuters: 'We were attacked by people from the village. They accused us of being murderous mercenaries. But in reality they simply refuse to tolerate us. Our camp was burnt down. Our company and our embassy helped us get to the airport.'

"Hundreds of black immigrants from the poorest African countries, who work mainly as low-wage day labourers in Libya, have been wounded by the rebels. From fear of being killed, some of them have refrained from going to a doctor."

At the time of the outbreak of civil war, about 1.5 million black Africans were employed in Libya as labourers in the oil industry and the construction, agriculture and service sectors. **WSWS**

## South African president urged to push for UN rethink on Libya

JOHANNESBURG, — One of South Africa's opposition leaders on Wednesday urged President Jacob Zuma to call for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to review Resolution 1973 on Libya.

Bantu Holomisa, leader of the United Democratic Movement, said in an open letter to Zuma that South Africa's decision to support the UN resolution unwittingly gave support to military intervention by the West in Libya, the South African Press Association (SAPA) reported.

"The allied forces, which seem to be the military wing of the Security Council, are brazenly and openly using lethal weapons in their quest to protect the so-called civilians," Holomisa said.

He pointed out that recent reports show that these Libyan civilians are the biggest casualties in the conflict.



President Jacob Zuma

Holomisa added that the West's military action goes against the main thrust of the UN Security Council's resolution.

Although the Western allied forces did not have forces on the ground, it would appear they "have adopted the rebel forces and are giving them aerial cover

in fighting the Libyan forces," he said.

He found it strange that the international community treats the bullets coming from the barrels of the rebel forces differently from those of the Libyan forces, as these are portrayed as the only ones causing harm and injury to innocent civilians.

The rebel Libyan forces have an unfair advantage over the Libyan forces due to their support from the West, he said.

South Africa is one of the countries tasked by the African Union to resolve the Libyan crisis, Holomisa said.

He added that the outcome of the UN vote is embarrassing because it gave the West permission to use military intervention against the African Union's resolution.

This contradicted South Africa's long-held foreign policy position on African conflict and African problems in general, he said. **(Xinhua)**

## Australian soldiers in Afghanistan post racist anti-Afghan comments

By Margaret Rees

Australian soldiers participating in the US-led occupation of Afghanistan have been caught posting racist videos and messages on the social networking web site, Facebook. Military officials and the Labor government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard have gone into damage control, hoping to avert protests, and other repercussions, in Afghanistan.

Last Thursday, Channel 7 News broadcast video footage found on the Internet, showing Australian troops blowing up a bridge in Afghanistan and laughing as nearby Afghan civilians were startled by the explosion. "Scared the f— out of that mufti," one soldier was heard saying on the video. At least 12 soldiers posted foul and racist comments about Afghans, which included use of the term "raghead". Other comments called for civilians to be "butt stroked"—

slang for being beaten with a rifle—and some soldiers joked about shooting local people and running them over in military vehicles.

The soldiers also described Gillard as "f—ing ranga" [red-head] and Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd as a "tool".

Chief of Defence Force Angus Houston described the comments as damaging to the reputation of Australian troops. "This flies in the face of what we are trying to achieve in Afghanistan," he declared. "We are trying to win the hearts and the minds of the people." Acting Chief of Army Major-General Paul Symon said the army was appalled. "I struggle to understand, with all the training that we do and with the quality of soldiers that we have, that that sort of language has been posted," he told 7 News. "There will be thou-

sands of soldiers disgusted at what we're looking at."

Australian Defence Association executive director Neil James expressed concerns that the Facebook material would harm the war effort: "In counterinsurgency was fought in the age of the Internet and social media, it's just simply stupid to do anything that provides the enemy with propaganda... This type of posting on social media is not only disgraceful and unprofessional but also incredibly stupid."

Government ministers feigned outrage. Defence Minister Stephen Smith said, "I condemn it absolutely." He telephoned his Afghan counterpart, Abdul Rahim Wardak, to apologise. Smith later told the ABC: "I made the point to him that the chief of the defence force and the chief of army were investigating this matter and in all likelihood disciplinary proceedings would follow." He insisted that the con-

## Venezuela supports Gaddafi's resistance to air raids

MONTEVIDEO, March 30 — Visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said here Wednesday he supports Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's military resistance to air raids by the international community.

Gaddafi "is doing what he has to do," Chavez said during a joint press conference with Uruguayan President Jose Mujica.

Chavez said he cannot "give answers as to what Gaddafi is doing there, but there is no justification for a group of countries to bomb (Libya)."

The president repeated his pro-



President Hugo Chavez

posal to set up a peace commission to mediate between the op-

position forces and Gaddafi's regime as an alternative to military intervention.

"How can we achieve peace with bombs?" Chavez asked. He said the bombing by the United States and other European countries was motivated by "taking the oil and stealing the reserves."

Chavez met with Mujica earlier on Wednesday to sign a number of agreements on bilateral cooperation and energy. The trip to Uruguay is part of a regional tour which will also take the Venezuelan president to Argentina, Bolivia and Colombia. **(Xinhua)**

Australian soldiers' attitudes toward the Afghan people coincides with the details emerging about the murderous operations of the US 5th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Division "Kill Team".

The Labor government has been keen to attribute the leaked footage from Afghanistan to a few "bad apples" because it is deeply implicated in all the war crimes being carried out there. The US-Australian military base at Tarin Kowt in Oruzgan province is an integral part of the attempt to subjugate the Afghan population. Australian special forces are also heavily involved in the systematic assassination of alleged opponents of the occupation.

During a parliamentary debate last year, Prime Minister Gillard declared Australian troops would fight in the country alongside US forces for at least another 10 years, despite majority opposition among the Australian population.

After the initial round of government-military apologies for the Australian soldiers' remarks, several high-profile figures defended and played down their actions.

Former armed services chief General Peter Cosgrove, speaking to a Liberal Party meeting in Melbourne, demanded that the incident be kept "in proportion". He continued: "Some soldiers who have been silly in posting these silly disreputable comments are also putting their lives on the line

for ordinary Afghans... Remember that these kids are actually, by their deeds, showing that they see a worthwhile mission for which they're prepared to accept that great danger."

The Australian media was quick to pick up on Cosgrove's line. In an editorial last Saturday, the Melbourne *Age* stated: "Soldiers are young and sometimes have not yet developed a mature world view. Being trained and required to use weapons against others can also produce an understandable desensitisation in some; it is one of the many unhappy by-products of war. But it is important that the boundaries between emotions and actions are enforced."

The next day, the *Sunday Age's* international editor, Tom Hyland, wrote an article titled, "Outbreak of hysteria when soldiers crack." Hyland demanded less of a "brouhaha" caused by "journalists shouting to the world" about the racist comments. He scoffed at intimations there was a problem with the "culture" of the armed forces, "where soldiers swear and sailors drink."

Such apologetics point to the awareness in ruling class circles that, notwithstanding the official denials, contempt for the lives and rights of oppressed people is actively cultivated in the training and deployment of an imperialist military. **WSWS**